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## **Motivation Romania Foundation**

### ***Wheels of Change* – towards appropriate local wheelchair user services in Romania**

### **SPANS 007 – Final Grant Activity Completion Report**



Grantee Name: **Motivation Romania  
Foundation (MRF)**

Grant Number: **SPANS-007**

Project name: ***Wheels of Change* – towards appropriate local wheelchair user services  
in Romania and the extension**

***The Wheels of Change Move On* – towards appropriate wheelchair provision, sports  
and accessibility for mainstream participation of Romanians with disabilities**

Project Start Date: **April 1, 2009**

Project End Date: **March 31, 2014**

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## **I. List of Acronyms**

<b>BMI</b>	<b>Body Mass Index</b>
<b>DGASPC</b>	<b>County Department of Social Work and Child Protection</b>
<b>FG</b>	<b>Focus Groups</b>
<b>HIA</b>	<b>County Health Insurance Agency</b>
<b>ISPO</b>	<b>International Society for Prosthetics and Orthotics</b>
<b>ITF</b>	<b>International Tennis Federation</b>
<b>IWBF</b>	<b>International Wheelchair Basketball Federation</b>
<b>MRF</b>	<b>Motivation Romania Foundation</b>
<b>NAQ</b>	<b>National Authority for Qualifications</b>
<b>NGOs</b>	<b>Non-Governmental (not-for-profit) Organizations</b>
<b>NHIA</b>	<b>National Health Insurance Agency</b>
<b>OS</b>	<b>Occupational Standard</b>
<b>PC</b>	<b>Project Coordinator</b>
<b>PD</b>	<b>People with Disabilities</b>
<b>PG</b>	<b>Peer Group</b>
<b>PGT</b>	<b>Peer Group Training</b>
<b>PM Team</b>	<b>Project Management Team</b>
<b>PT/OT</b>	<b>Physiotherapist / Occupational Therapist</b>
<b>QA</b>	<b>Quality Assurance</b>
<b>RT</b>	<b>Regional Team</b>
<b>SCI</b>	<b>Spinal Cord Injury</b>
<b>USAID</b>	<b>United States Agency for International Development</b>
<b>WCU</b>	<b>Wheelchair User</b>
<b>WCD</b>	<b>Wheelchair Distribution</b>
<b>WHO</b>	<b>World Health Organization</b>
<b>WSTP</b>	<b>Wheelchair Service Training Package</b>

## II. Executive Summary

The overall goal of the *Wheels of Change* project was to improve the access of people with mobility disabilities in Romania to appropriately prescribed, personalized mobility equipment by creating regionally available wheelchair services and peer group independent living training programs. A **network of 11 regional teams** consisting of peer group trainers (wheelchair users) and therapists was created by Motivation Romania Foundation (MRF) to provide *specialized wheelchair user support services* to people with mobility disabilities throughout the country. These services included appropriate wheelchair assessment, prescription, provision and adaptation as well as training for an independent life. The creation of the regional teams brought wheelchair services closer to the beneficiaries and facilitated access to social integration services for people with mobility disabilities. Regional teams are located in Sibiu, Brasov, Ilfov, Prahova, Arges, Galati, Iasi, Neamt, Bihor, Timis, and Mehedinti, each one providing services in two or more counties. MRF involve wheelchair users in its activities; they are peer trainers and role models for project beneficiaries, a unique concept of services implemented in Romania only by Motivation. Peer trainers play a key role in motivating wheelchair users to come out of isolation, and become more independent and socially active. Independent living training programs consisted of peer group (PG) seminars, one-week active rehabilitation camps and two-week PG active rehabilitation and training programs organized in various regions all over the country. Camps and active rehabilitation programs are lengthier, more in-depth versions of the peer group training (PGT) seminars, providing opportunities to wheelchair users to experience independent living in wheelchair accessible settings, thus making progress in regaining self-confidence and independence and facilitating their social re-integration. In order to improve services for its beneficiaries, MRF also developed and implemented a quality management system and obtained quality certification for the independent living training services, according to SR EN ISO 9001:2008 standards.

Another important project outcome was increased awareness among key stakeholders, such as professionals in social and health area, family members and caregivers, NGOs, and governmental representatives at local, regional and national level on the importance of correct positioning, *appropriate* prescription of personalized mobility equipment, and provision of the wheelchair *together with independent living training* for maximizing health and independence of wheelchair users. MRF organized all over the country local information and awareness raising seminars for specialists working with people with mobility disabilities, based on the wheelchair provision principles recommended by the World Health Organization (WHO). *The Guidelines on the Provision of Manual Wheelchairs in less resourced settings* issued by WHO in cooperation with the International Society for Prosthetics and Orthotics (ISPO) and USAID was translated by MRF in Romanian and launched during a National Conference that brought together more than one hundred participants, including governmental representatives, foreign and Romanian NGOs, representatives of the Departments of Social Work and Child Protection (DGASPC) from various counties, specialists and higher education representatives, as well as people with disabilities, their family members and MRF

regional teams. WHO Guidelines on wheelchair provision was further disseminated at regional level through eight regional seminars, attended by over 200 participants.

The initial project *The Wheels of Change – towards appropriate local wheelchair user services in Romania* was implemented between April 1, 2009 - March 31, 2012, being followed by a two-year extension called *The Wheels of Change Move On – towards appropriate wheelchair provision, sports and accessibility for mainstream participation of Romanians with disabilities* which was implemented between April 1, 2012 - March 31, 2014. The extension carried forward the impact of the initial project by expanding the range of services that enabled wheelchair users' social participation, thus reducing the number of wheelchair users immobilized at home and unable to participate in sports, leisure and culture. New services included counseling and group support activities, accessibility assessments and wheelchair sport activities. For the first time, due to USAID support, MRF had the possibility to offer a continuum of services that helped wheelchair users in five regions to get out of isolation, become more independent and participate in community. Service diversification brought the regional teams closer to our beneficiaries and increased the impact of MRF services with regard to the social reintegration of wheelchair users participating in the project.

The *Wheels of Change Move On* project also involved for the first time wheelchair users themselves in examining the impact of wheelchairs and existing wheelchair services on their social participation. More than 1,100 people who used or needed a wheelchair participated in a **comprehensive sociological research** conducted by MRF, through face-to-face interviews, focus groups or telephone interviews. The results of this research study showed that wheelchair users who benefited from appropriate mobility equipment and participated in peer group independent living training programs such as: seminars, active rehabilitation camps, group support, and wheelchair sport activities acquired greater independence and self-confidence and participated more actively in the social life.

One of the major achievements of the *Wheels of Change Move On* project was the development of a **certified professional training program** on wheelchair assessment, prescription, provision and adaptation based on the WHO Wheelchair Service Training Package (WSTP). MRF translated WSTP training materials in Romanian and obtained authorization from the National Authority for Qualifications (NAQ) for both Basic and Intermediate modules, thus creating for the first time professional training opportunities in wheelchair provision. Previously, this subject area was neither addressed in the university education system, nor through certified training or practice. 31 professionals participated in certified training courses and received training certificates recognized by NAQ. Training certification was a result of a longer process that included other significant accomplishments: the inclusion of a new occupation '*Technician for wheelchair assessment, prescription, provision and adaptation*' in the Romanian Code of Occupations and the development of the occupational standard (OS) and the qualification for this new occupation approved by the National Authority for Qualification, as well. In addition to the certified training programs, the dissemination of principles of WHO Wheelchair Guidelines among specialists continued through introductory lectures on appropriate wheelchair prescription, positioning and adaptations organized in various universities all over the country. More than 400 students and professors attended these seminars.

Wheelchair sport was another area that was developed by MRF through the project, by creating for the first time opportunities to wheelchair users from five regions for practicing regular sport training with professional coaches and participating in public demonstrations and competitions in order to demonstrate their skills. Wheelchair users practiced various sports, including wheelchair basketball, archery, tennis, bocce or athletics. Five wheelchair basketball teams were created and involved in weekly training, while athletes from three regional teams also began archery training. Also, more than 360 wheelchair users participated in 90 wheelchair sport demonstrations and competitions organized at local, regional or national level. Wheelchair sport events organized in public places play a key role in building wheelchair users' self-confidence and self-esteem and educating general public as well about wheelchair users' skills, thus promoting social inclusion at the community level.

Another significant accomplishment under the *Wheels of Change Move On* project is the creation of the **Accessibility Map** launched in December 2012, a public web site [www.accesibil.org](http://www.accesibil.org) which provides information to wheelchair users about the accessibility of public interest buildings throughout Romania. The Accessibility Map together with the **Accessibility Mark**, an award recognizing buildings accessible to wheelchair users, are useful tools for promoting good practices in building accessibility and for advocating for an improved accessibility to wheelchair users. The Accessibility Mark was registered by MRF with the State Office for Inventions and Trademarks. Following the accessibility assessments conducted by MRF regional teams, more than 1,200 buildings of public interest covering areas, such as: tourism, culture, entertainment, sport, public institutions, health, education, public transport were included in the Accessibility Map. MRF also conducted more than 2,100 accessibility assessments for wheelchair users' homes providing recommendations on how accessibility could be improved.

The cumulative indicators referring to wheelchair provision and independent living training of *Wheels of Change* and *Wheels of Change Move On* projects were accomplished, and even exceeded the targets. In five years, MRF provided over **7,000 appropriate wheelchairs** in various regions throughout the country (compared to an initial target of 4,960) and more than **2,000 people with mobility disabilities participated in independent living training** programs (vs. 1968 planned). MRF organized 109 PGT seminars, 25 active rehabilitation camps and 66 two-week PGT and active rehabilitation programs. Also, 825 students and specialists who participated in information seminars or practice sessions became aware of the principles of appropriate wheelchair provision as formulated in the Guidelines developed by the World Health Organization.

### **III. Management**

#### **a. Staffing, staff training, systems and procedures**

The *Wheels of Change* project was implemented by the project management team and the staff from the regional teams. The management team consisted of:

- Project Coordinator
- Peer Group Independent Living Training Coordinator (wheelchair user)
- Physiotherapists / Occupational therapists Coordinator

- Wheelchair Provision Coordinator
- Quality Assurance Coordinator
- Sustainability Coordinator
- Financial Officer

Regional wheelchair user services teams created through the project included Peer Group independent living trainers (people with mobility disabilities), therapists (physical therapist/occupational therapist/psychologist) and team coordinators. Also, MRF involved volunteers in project activities, whenever needed, especially Peer Group trainers, physical therapists, or students at physical therapy faculties.

MRF gave a special attention to staff training throughout the project as this was a key element for ensuring the transfer of expertise and organizational experience from the central level to the regional level and a consistent approach within the entire network regarding technical, programmatic and financial issues. A comprehensive package of working procedures and tools was developed, including specific project implementation procedures and tools, communication and reporting procedures, and financial forms and procedures. Also, a common electronic database was developed to record and monitor information about beneficiaries and services provided across the entire network and for reporting purposes.

MRF Staff training consisted of:

- Comprehensive training sessions which brought together the project management team and all members of the regional teams. During the training sessions, participants learned about the project objectives and grant requirements, main concepts, procedures and principles of appropriate wheelchair provision and independent living skills training, counseling on social and professional integration of people with mobility disabilities, project implementation procedures, communication within the network, and financial procedures. The joint sessions provided opportunities to share results and best practices among teams and work together for identifying solutions to common problems and challenges they face. Learning through experience sharing proved to be an effective way for improving the performance of the teams. Also, these face-to-face meetings improved cooperation and cohesion among the project team members.
- Follow-up, on-site training and individual coaching to the regional teams provided by more experienced MRF staff. Regional teams received coaching in setting up activities, initiating contacts with potential partners and beneficiaries, carrying out home visits and visits to hospitals and centers, or providing wheelchair services to beneficiaries. They also received on-site support from MRF technical staff for organizing their first PG independent living training seminars and camps. On-site training and support was offered and adapted according to the needs of the teams.
- Experience-sharing activities in which new regional teams attended similar training events organized by more experienced teams, prior to organizing their own independent living training programs.
- Specific training sessions on wheelchair prescription and adaptation conducted by a specialist from Motivation Charitable Trust UK, for therapists and wheelchair service technicians. Training included practical exercises based on the wheelchair provision

principles as stated in the WHO-ISPO-USAID Guidelines on the Provision of Manual Wheelchairs in Less Resourced Settings. In June 2011, MRF was selected by the World Health Organization to conduct a pilot training on WHO WSTP Intermediate Module in Bucharest. 11 MRF technicians and physical therapists attended this training.

- Individual training for new members of regional teams conducted at MRF Headquarters, in the form of workshops on various topics, such as wheelchair provision, PG training, program and financial procedures. This type of training was designed in order to address the problem of staff fluctuation faced during project implementation, especially among physical therapists.
- Training on quality management system and procedures for regional teams and PGT staff in order to comply with the requirements of the quality management system developed by MRF for PGT services and certified according to SR EN ISO 9001:2008 standards. All regional teams received specific training and guidance on how to use standard forms and how to implement specific procedures of the new MRF quality management system. The development of a quality management system helped MRF improve PGT working procedures and to ensure a consistent approach within the entire network.

The *Wheels of Change Move On* project extension was also implemented by a project management team and the staff from the regional teams. The project management team was adjusted to include coordinators for the newly launched activities such as the research study on wheelchairs and wheelchair user services, the accessibility or wheelchair sport activities.

The new project management team included:

- Project Coordinator
- Wheelchair User Services Coordinator (wheelchair user)
- Physiotherapists' / Occupational therapists' (PT/OT) Coordinator
- Research Expert
- Quality Assurance & Certification Expert
- IT Specialist
- Wheelchair Prescription Training Coordinator
- Wheelchair Sports Coordinator
- Wheelchair Accessibility Expert
- Marketing and Communication Coordinator
- Sustainability Coordinator
- Financial Officer

A project assistant and a driver also provided logistic support.

Five regional teams were selected for developing and implementing new wheelchair user services at regional level, while wheelchair provision continued in all 11 regions. Each regional wheelchair user service team included: a team coordinator, a PG trainer (wheelchair user), a PT/OT specialist and a sports instructor. Also, each team included an architect and a psychologist as consultants that provided specific support for accessibility activities and respectively, counseling and group support activities.

During the *Wheels of Change Move On* project, staff training focused on transferring the necessary knowledge and skills for implementing the new activities, including:



- Training sessions on the new project objectives and new activities to be developed and implemented, as well as specific tools and procedures, indicators and action plans for the main activities developed by each activity coordinator
- Training on conducting building accessibility assessments
- Training on data collection through questionnaire guided interviews for the research study
- Training on using web-site based technology for filling in the information in the Accessibility Map

#### **b. Coordination**

The coordination of eleven regional teams and the communication within the network proved to be very challenging. E-mail communication and meetings via Skype were regularly used to ensure remote coordination and monitoring of day-by-day activities. Weekly planning and monitoring meetings were organized via Skype either with groups of regional teams, or with each separate team. On case by case basis, coordinators of specific activities participated as well in these meetings, in order to provide the necessary technical assistance to the regional teams. The consistent tools and working procedures developed at the beginning of each of the two projects proved to be very useful during activity implementation.

MRF also organized bi-annual coordination, evaluation and planning meetings that brought together the project management team and members of the regional teams in order to ensure that the project results are achieved and consistent working procedures are implemented by all the teams. In addition to the specific training, results analysis and planning activities, these coordination meetings offered opportunities for members of the regional teams to meet face to face, to share experience and to strengthen cooperation with the other teams. Annual meetings between the project management team and regional team coordinators were organized as well for coordination purposes.

A comprehensive coordination and communication plan was developed in order to ensure coordination at all project levels, including coordination between the project management team and the regional teams, between activity coordinators and the teams, and among the members of project management team. Due to the numerous teams and the variety of activities, a multi-layer flow of communication was designed in order to ensure proper coordination and avoid overlaps or gaps. Activity coordination and regional teams' coordination were split between the project coordinator and PGT coordinator, each one coordinating specific activities and specific teams. Regional team coordinators were empowered to organize and supervise day-by-day activities in their regions. Also, the Activity managers organized and coordinated specific activities and provided the necessary technical support to the regional teams in their area of expertise. The Coordination and Communication Chart is presented in Annex 1.

#### **c. Supervision and monitoring, Technical Assistance**

Staff supervision and coordination was conducted according to the coordination plan developed within the project. Various monitoring and reporting mechanisms were put in place, in order to ensure that activities are implemented on time and project objectives and

results are achieved. A reporting system was developed for monitoring staff activities and progress in project implementation on monthly basis, both at team level and for specific objectives/areas of activity. Specific data on beneficiaries of wheelchairs and wheelchair user services were collected by the regional teams and included in a common database where services provided by the teams were registered on a regular basis. Regular meetings with the regional teams were organized via Skype in order to discuss progress of activities, share good practices and challenges faced and identify possible ways to address them. Attendance sheets were kept and evaluation questionnaires were developed and applied for specific activities organized within the project, in order to receive feedback from the beneficiaries. Client satisfaction questionnaires were also regularly applied as this was a requirement of the quality management system standards.

Field visits were conducted by members of project management team for monitoring the activities implemented by the regional teams and for providing technical assistance in order to improve their performance. Regional teams also received on-site technical assistance for organizing their first independent living training programs in their own regions.

Activity coordinators provided continuous technical assistance and support to the regional teams in their area of expertise. In wheelchair provision field, for complex wheelchair adaptations, regional teams also benefitted from the technical expertise provided by a clinical specialist from Motivation Charitable Trust UK, who was part of the group of experts who developed the WHO Guidelines on Wheelchair Provision and WHO Wheelchair Service Training Package.

Annual evaluation and planning seminars were also organized in order to analyze the status of project implementation and indicators achieved by the regional teams and to take the necessary corrective measures for improving their performance.

#### **d. Office, sub-offices and logistic support**

Office spaces were identified, rented and furnished for all regional teams to serve as regional team headquarters and central service provision location for each region. The lack of building accessibility was a major constraint in identifying an appropriate office in each region. Whenever needed, MRF carried out small accessibility works in order to ensure access of wheelchair users to the respective spaces. All teams were provided with telephones, computers and internet connections to facilitate communication with the project management team and among regional teams. Regional teams were also provided with vehicles for conducting home visits and visits to hospitals or rehabilitation centers for conducting wheelchair assessments and providing wheelchair services to their beneficiaries.

Logistic support for wheelchair provision, including wheelchair warehouse and wheelchair transportation was provided by MRF headquarters. Financial and accounting services were also provided by the MRF headquarters for the entire network. The project management team located at MRF headquarters in Ilfov and at the office in Bucharest ensured coordination, logistic support, programmatic and technical assistance.

## IV. Program Accomplishments by Results

### a. Program implementation approach and methodology

The overall goal of the *Wheels of Change* project was to improve the access of people with mobility disabilities in Romania to appropriately prescribed, personalized mobility equipment by creating regionally available wheelchair services and peer group independent living training programs. A **network of 11 regional teams** consisting of peer group trainers (wheelchair users) and therapists was created by Motivation Romania Foundation (MRF) to provide *specialized wheelchair user support services* to people with mobility disabilities throughout the country. These services included assessment, prescription, provision and adaptation of appropriate mobility equipment and peer group training for independent living.

Regional teams are located in Sibiu, Brasov, Ilfov, Prahova, Arges, Galati, Iasi, Neamt, Bihor, Timis, and Mehedinti covering all regions across the country, each team providing services in two or more counties. Their role is to identify people with mobility disabilities in their respective regions who need mobility equipment and wheelchair user services, and to provide them appropriate wheelchairs and wheelchair user services. The team members were trained to carry out their activities in a manner that ensures quality of services and the respect for beneficiaries' rights. In order to create a referral network for indentifying beneficiaries, the mobile teams established relationships with key institutions and organizations in their regions, such as: The County Departments for Social Work and Child Protection, social workers from the town halls in rural or urban areas, NGOs, community centers for people with disabilities, hospitals, or rehabilitation centers. Each regional team conducted regular home visits or visits to rehabilitation centers, community centers and hospitals and provided assessments and prescriptions of appropriate, personalized mobility equipment, and support for obtaining subsidized or free of charge wheelchairs through the public Health Insurance Agencies (HIA) or from private donors, respectively. Regional services also included wheelchair provision, final adjustments to adapt the mobility equipment to user's needs and individual training on how to use the mobility equipment.

MRF involve wheelchair users in its activities; they are peer trainers and role models for project beneficiaries. Peer trainers play a key role in motivating wheelchair users to come out of isolation, and become more independent and socially active. Peer group training (PGT) is a unique concept implemented in Romania only by MRF that involves wheelchair users in training other wheelchair users in: wheelchair handling skills for greater mobility and independence, hygiene and personal care to avoid pressure sores and other health conditions associated with mobility disabilities, emotional issues and sexuality, counseling for social and vocational integration, or wheelchair sports. In order to ensure a consistent approach within the network, MRF developed specific power point presentations and training support materials to be used by all teams during training programs. Peer group (PG) independent living training programs consisted of one to three day PG seminars, one-week active rehabilitation camps, and two-week PG active rehabilitation and independent living training programs organized in various regions all over the country.

Active rehabilitation programs are lengthier and more in-depth versions of the PG independent living seminars, an innovative service developed by MRF that combine physical rehabilitation with independent living training. These programs proved to play a key role in facilitating social integration of people with mobility disabilities, as resulted from the findings of the Research Study on wheelchair and wheelchair services conducted by MRF.



Active rehabilitation camps proved to have an immediate impact on the lives of participants, because they are given the opportunity to experience independent living in wheelchair accessible settings, thus regaining self-confidence and hope that they will be able to achieve more independence with adequate support from specialized services and peers groups. During a one-week intensive training program participants learn and practice wheelchair handling techniques, discuss with the peer group trainers about the most important aspects related to health care, recovering from an SCI, rights, access to services. Camps also provide opportunities for interaction with other people who are not family members, motivating people with mobility disabilities to get out of their isolation and try to rebuild their social connections. Beneficiaries appreciated a lot their exposure to activities that they could not even imagine that a wheelchair user can do, such as swimming, dancing, going to picnic, practicing sports or other outdoor activities. In their final evaluation questionnaires most participants considered active rehabilitation camps as very useful and pleasant experiences and expressed a genuine interest in participating in other similar activities. They highly appreciated the opportunity to learn and practice key techniques on how to handle the wheelchair, and considered that the progress made during the camp would make their day-by-day life much easier. These techniques refer to: transfers to and from the wheelchair, overcoming small obstacles, or handling the wheelchair on the ramp. But even more important than the mobility independence that participants gain during the camp, is the impact on their morale and the improving of the self-confidence.

During the camps organized within the *Wheels of Change Move On* project, MRF introduced a unique assessment and intervention tool consisting of comprehensive health assessments to analyze and assess wheelchair impact on positioning, nutrition and general health, in the context where no such services or studies were available in Romania. Health assessments were conducted by a multidisciplinary team including an orthopedist, a rehabilitation doctor, a nutritionist and a physical therapist. Specialists used specific screening forms specially created for this purpose. Each wheelchair user filled in a questionnaire with items related to their nutrition and general lifestyle. The screening process included various weight and height measurements and BMI was determined. Based on the results of the screening process, each wheelchair user received a personalized diet, basic information on nutrition and hydration and they were instructed how to have a healthy life-style. Another screening section included: associated pathology, physical exercise routines, heart rates (HR) and blood pressure (BP), muscular tonus evaluation, osteoporosis test, or strength test using the palm dynamometer. After the second screening process, each participant received recommendations and was trained on how to improve his or her physical condition. Health assessments were highly appreciated by MRF beneficiaries and there are few successful examples of beneficiaries that significantly improved their health status after applying physicians' recommendations.

By creating the network of regional teams MRF has significantly increased its capacity to provide appropriate mobility equipment and independent living training services in Romania. An increased number of people with mobility disabilities in Romania have now access to appropriate, personalized wheelchairs and wheelchair user services, in their regions, closer to their homes.

Another major objective of the *Wheels of Change* project was to increase awareness among key stakeholders and specialists regarding the importance of correct positioning, prescription of personalized mobility equipment and provision of the equipment together with peer group independent living training for maximizing health and independence of wheelchair users. MRF organized various awareness raising events at local, regional, and national level bringing together specialists, NGO and governmental representatives, people with disabilities and their caregivers.

Regional teams organized local information and awareness raising seminars throughout the country for physical therapists, students at physical therapy faculties, health specialists, NGO representatives and specialists directly involved in providing services for people with disabilities. These events informed participants regarding the importance of correct wheelchair positioning and prescription, and the importance of providing independent living training *together* with the wheelchair. Discussions with specialists during seminars pointed out that there is a great need for specific information and training regarding correct positioning and wheelchair provision principles. These seminars also provided unique opportunities for the transfer of information and best practices from specialists directly involved in providing wheelchair user services to future practitioners who are now students or young university graduates. Participants mostly appreciated MRF practical approach that combines theoretical aspects with case studies, wheelchair users' testimonies and demonstrations of wheelchair handling skills. The experience of MRF peer group trainers,

wheelchair users who overcame barriers and regained their independence had a great impact on the participants, as well. These events highlighted the role that each specialist at any level could play in ensuring access of people with disabilities to appropriate wheelchairs and wheelchair support services in order to maintain or improve their health and personal independence and reduce their isolation. After attending these seminars, MRF cooperation with specialists and local governmental institutions improved and we received requests from several directors of County Departments of Social Work and Child Protection to organize such seminars for all their staff working in centers for people with disabilities.

Following the translation of the WHO-ISPO-USAID Guidelines on the provision of Manual Wheelchairs in Less Resourced Settings in Romanian language, MRF organized a series of events for disseminating the Guidelines and to make relevant specialist groups aware regarding specific wheelchair provision issues that need to be considered when developing appropriate wheelchair user services in Romania. The WHO Guidelines was launched during a National Conference and it was further disseminated at regional level through eight regional seminars. During the conference, participants analyzed the current wheelchair provision system in Romania based on the results of the research report “Immobilized at home – the crisis of wheelchair provision financing in Romania” – drafted by a local think tank, the Romanian Academic Society (SAR). A debate was initiated on the “Assessment and prescription of mobility equipment”, focusing on two main questions: Who does the assessment and prescription and who provides the funding sources for these services? Some of the problems identified by the participants referred to: the lack of qualified people in the public system who could eventually offer such services, the disconnection between the social system at the local/county level and the medical system at the central level which practically leaves such services uncovered, unclear responsibilities of the two systems, or the lack of public policies in this area. The main conclusion of the Conference was the need of national standards regarding wheelchairs assessment, prescription and provision. Unfortunately, due to the lack of leadership on the governmental side regarding public policies for people with disabilities and frequent changes of ministers, directors and governmental structures it was quite difficult to identify an appropriate counterpart at the decision-making level to initiate a dialogue about the need of developing a coherent policy regarding wheelchair and wheelchair user services provision.

The *Wheels of Change Move On* project continued the dissemination of the WHO Guidelines on wheelchair provisions by organizing introductory lectures in universities on appropriate wheelchair prescription, positioning and adaptations. The lectures presented the main principles of *appropriate* wheelchair for students in relevant universities all over the country. In addition, MRF organized practice sessions on wheelchair assessment, prescription and adaptations for students and specialists, during PGT seminars or camps.

The most important step forward in specialist training was the development of a certified professional training program on wheelchair assessment, prescription, provision and adaptation based on the WHO Wheelchair Guidelines and accompanying WHO Wheelchair Service Training Package (WSTP), consisting of two training levels: basic and intermediate. MRF translated WSTP training materials in Romanian. The course was certified by the National Authority for Qualifications according to Romanian legislation, thus MRF created

for the first time professional training opportunities in wheelchair provision. Previously, this subject area was neither addressed in the university education system, nor through certified training or practice. Training certification was a result of a long and cumbersome process that included: the introduction of a new occupation '*Technician for wheelchair assessment, prescription, provision and adaptation*' in the Romanian Code of Occupations, conducting an occupational analysis, and the development of the occupational standard and the qualification for this new occupation all approved by the National Authority for Qualification, as well. The development of the Occupational Standard was one of the most challenging activities that required a lot of back and forth adjustments due to the structure, the very specific language, and very strict format required by the occupational standard methodology.

The *Wheels of Change Move On* project involved for the first time wheelchair users in analyzing the impact of wheelchair and wheelchair user services on their positioning, health and social participation, through participation in a sociological research study. The research span from January 2012 to February 2014 and it took a close look at the impact of mobility equipment and services, as perceived and expressed by the wheelchair users. The target group included 1,191 wheelchair users or persons who need a wheelchair, whose opinions and perceptions were recorded through 1,034 questionnaires (face-to-face interviews conducted by regional teams), 100 phone interviews and 12 focus groups with 130 persons in the same category. The respondents were current or future beneficiaries of Motivation's services, and this renders the findings of the research not entirely relevant for the general population of wheelchair users in Romania. The most consistent quantitative information came from the answers to the questionnaires, qualitative information was extracted from the discussions with the focus groups, while phone interviews provided more details and added to the conclusions that derived from the analysis of the questionnaires. Participants in the focus groups considered that solving accessibility problems in public interest buildings and public transportation should be among the first priorities of any public policies aiming to improve the lives of people with mobility disabilities. These findings confirm once again that including accessibility issues within the project activities was based on a real need. Also, most participants in MRF independent living training programs consider that their lives have much improved after their participation in such programs, thus confirming the value of the peer group independent living training programs offered within the project. An overview of the study in English language is attached as Annex 2.

Wheelchair sport was another new activity developed by MRF through the *Wheels of Change Move On* project, as most people with mobility disabilities did not know they can practice sports and those who wanted to practice sports for leisure did not have sports practice opportunities. This activity helped mainstream wheelchair sports in Romania by making ongoing sports trainings available locally to wheelchair users. MRF created five wheelchair basketball teams, thus providing for the first time opportunities to wheelchair users from five regions for practicing regular sport training with professional coaches trained in wheelchair sports within the project. Athletes from three regions also participated in wheelchair archery training and competitions. Archery proved to have a better potential to attract more wheelchair users towards practicing sport compared to basketball which is a team sport that requires advanced wheelchair handling abilities, or tennis which is a much more expensive



sport. Women wheelchair users seemed more willing to practice archery than other wheelchair sports. Another advantage is that people with and without disabilities participate in archery training and in competitions together, thus facilitating the social integration of people with disabilities.



Regional teams organized regular local wheelchair sport demonstrations in public places, such as schools, malls, sports halls at official basketball competitions, or outdoors at various local events. Some regional teams also organized special sport events for children wheelchair users called *Maximum Accessibility*. Children participated for the first time in a public sport event and played bocce, practiced shooting at the basketball backboard and wheelchair running through the poles. MRF also organized a national wheelchair sport event that brought together wheelchair users from all five regional teams. Wheelchair sport events organized in public places play a key role in building wheelchair users' self-confidence and self-esteem and educating general public as well about wheelchair users' skills, thus promoting social inclusion at the community level.

Group support activities completed the range of services offered by MRF to wheelchair users as part of the training for independent living. Through this new service MRF offered individual counseling and peer group support to wheelchair users in order to increase their self-trust and self-esteem, help them improve communication with their families and their peers and facilitate their social reintegration. This activity helped beneficiaries to overcome emotional barriers in their social integration process. Acceptance and adaptation to trauma was facilitated for each participant and after completing this step, beneficiaries began to be more focused on the present and the future, and less on the past. Another positive result was the development of personal autonomy of many beneficiaries based on the learning model offered by other beneficiaries more 'advanced' and instructors, which led to an increased



quality of life. Group meetings facilitated information sharing and communication between members, establishing friendly relationships among them, thus increasing and developing more flexible attitudes regarding interpersonal relations. Despite the initial reluctance of most wheelchair users to enroll in counseling activities, in the end this activity was highly appreciated by participants because the immediate impact on rebuilding social links.

Despite ongoing advocacy efforts by disability NGOs and individuals, and despite the existence of laws setting accessibility requirements for new construction as well as deadlines by which these have to be in place, wheelchair users in Romania still face an inaccessible society where public transportation, schools, universities and most public institutions are inaccessible. In this context, the Accessibility Map and the Accessibility Mark developed by Motivation represented necessary tools for raising awareness on the need of pro-active measures by public and private organizations to ensure equal access of wheelchair users to community life. The Accessibility Map created by MRF is a public web site [www.accesibil.org](http://www.accesibil.org) which provides information to wheelchair users about the level of accessibility of public interest buildings throughout Romania. Based on an auditing system developed by MRF, buildings are divided in three categories: accessible, partial accessible or inaccessible to wheelchair users. MRF trained regional teams on how to conduct building accessibility assessments. The Accessibility Map together with the Accessibility Mark, an award recognizing buildings accessible to wheelchair users are useful tools for promoting good practices in building accessibility. MRF regional teams conducted accessibility assessments of buildings of public interest covering areas, such as: tourism, culture, entertainment, public institutions, sport, health, education, or public transport. 1,200 buildings assessed by MRF were included in the Accessibility Map. MRF also conducted accessibility assessments for wheelchair users' homes providing recommendations on how accessibility could be improved (details on accessibility activities are provided in Annex 3).

## **b. Project activities and results achieved**

### ***Wheels of Change – towards appropriate local wheelchair user services in Romania***

April 1, 2009 – March 31, 2012

#### **I. Objectives**

1. Create a wheelchair user support network that provides complete mobility services to people with mobility disabilities in **7 regions of Romania**.
2. Provide appropriate **mobility equipment to 3,000 people** with mobility disabilities. Of these, **1,500 beneficiaries** will receive the wheelchair together with **independent living peer group training**.
3. Increase awareness among **200 specialists** regarding the importance of correct positioning, prescription of personalized mobility equipment and delivery of equipment together with peer group independent living training for maximizing wheelchair user health and independence.
4. Increase the professional quality of peer group independent living training services provided by MRF through service **quality certification**.

## II. Main Activities and Results Achieved

**Objective #1** Create a wheelchair user support network that provides complete mobility services to people with mobility disabilities in **7 regions of Romania**.

### Activities

- 1.1 Identify and train the regional team members
- 1.2 Identify, secure and refurbish locations for regional team headquarters
- 1.3 Set up a toll-free wheelchair user's hotline to provide information to people with mobility disabilities on how to obtain an appropriate wheelchair and train regional teams in working with beneficiaries with mobility disabilities and their family members
- 1.4. Create regional network working procedures
- 1.5. Annual evaluation and planning seminar

**Result achieved:** A network of 11 regional teams was created to provide complete mobility services to people with mobility disabilities throughout the country. The regional teams are located in the following counties: Arges, Bihor, Brasov, Ilfov, Galati, Iasi, Mehedinti, Neamt, Prahova, Sibiu and Timis. The result exceeded the initial target of 7 regional teams to be created.

Main Outcomes	Targets	Results	Comments
1.1 Regional teams created and trained	7	11	above the target
1.2 Regional operational offices created	7	11	above the target
1.3 Wheelchair User's hotline set up		Yes	accomplished
1.4 Consistent regional network working procedures created		Yes	accomplished
1.5 Annual evaluation and planning seminars organized	3	3	accomplished

**Objective #2** Provide appropriate **mobility equipment to 3,000 people** with mobility disabilities. Of these, **1,500 beneficiaries** will receive the wheelchair together with **independent living peer group training**.

### Activities

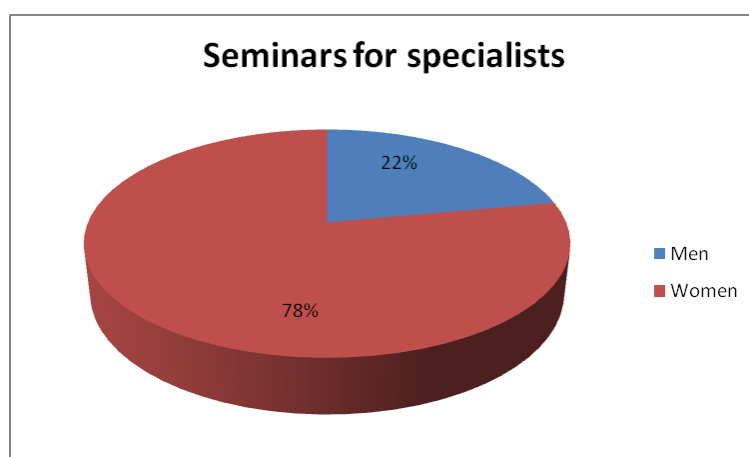
- 2.1. Home visits
- 2.2. Assessment, prescription, delivery and adaptations to appropriate, personalized mobility equipments for at least 3,000 people with mobility disabilities in the target regions
- 2.3. 1 day peer group independent living seminars in hospitals, rehabilitation centers, NGOs throughout each region
- 2.4. Annual one-week peer group training camps for children and parents, and adults with mobility disabilities respectively
- 2.5. Local/regional information and awareness seminars for 200 specialists working with people with mobility disabilities in hospitals / residential centers / public social services facilities

### Results achieved:

- Appropriate wheelchairs provided to **3,873** people with mobility disabilities. In addition, 278 people with disabilities received other mobility equipment. A total number of **4,151** beneficiaries received mobility equipment within the project.
- **1,555** people with disabilities participated in peer group independent living training programs. In addition, 184 wheelchair users participated in active rehabilitation camps.

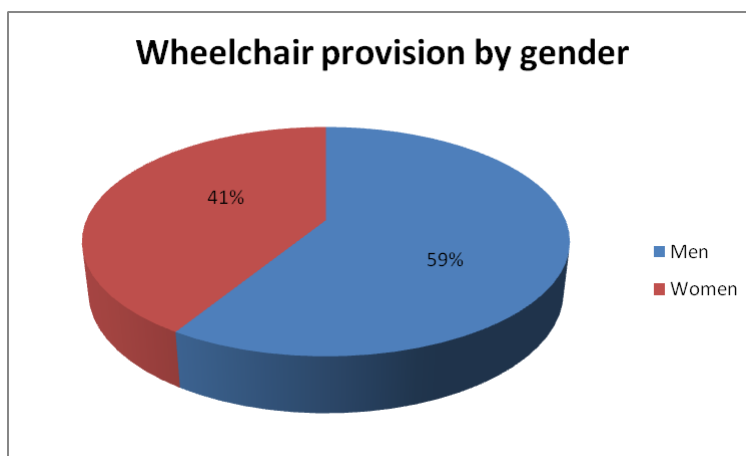
Main Outcomes	Targets	Results	Comments
2.1 Wheelchair assessments conducted during home visits and visits to hospitals, rehabilitation centers, group homes or NGOs	3,000	4,727	158% achieved
2.2 Appropriate wheelchairs prescribed and provided to beneficiaries	3,000	3,873	129% achieved
2.3 People with disabilities attended independent living training programs: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 87 independent living seminars and</li><li>• 66 two-week independent living training programs organized</li></ul>	1,500	1,555	104% achieved
2.4 One-week active rehabilitation camps for children and adults with mobility disabilities <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 19 camps organized: 4 camps for children and 15 camps for adults</li></ul>	180	184	102% achieved
2.5 Specialists working with people with mobility disabilities attended 22 local information and awareness seminars	200	385	193% achieved

Seminars for specialists		
Women	300	78 %
Men	85	22 %
Total	385	100 %

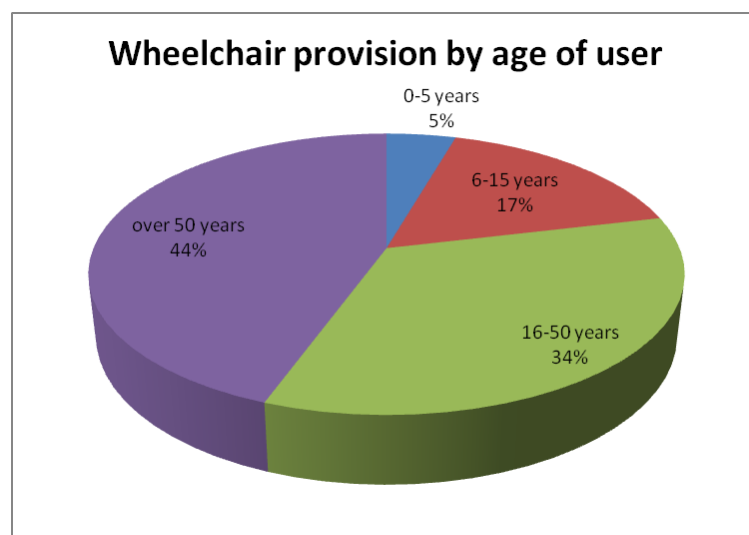


3,873 wheelchairs provided by the regional teams:

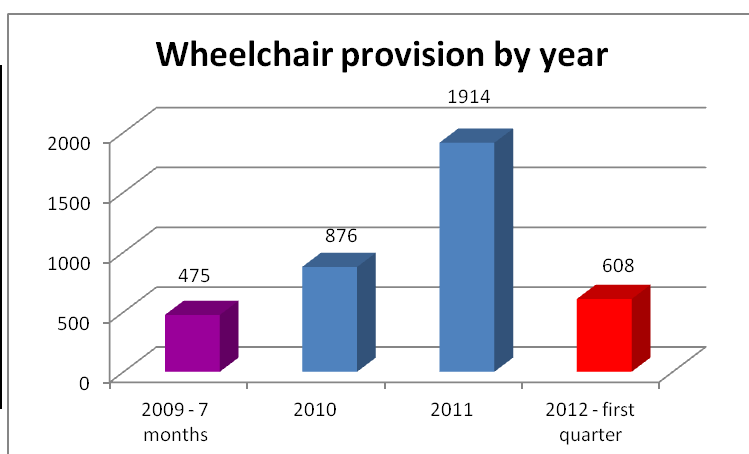
Wheelchair provision by gender		
Men	2279	59%
Women	1594	41%
<b>Total</b>	<b>3873</b>	<b>100%</b>



Wheelchair provision by age of user		
0-5 years	174	5%
6-15 years	651	17%
16-50 years	1328	34%
over 50 years	1720	44%
<b>Total</b>	<b>3873</b>	<b>100%</b>



Wheelchair provision by year				
	2009	2010	2011	2012
Quarter 1		194	493	608
Quarter 2	74	232	406	
Quarter 3	275	233	455	
Quarter 4	126	217	560	
<b>Total</b>	<b>475</b>	<b>876</b>	<b>1914</b>	<b>608</b>
<b>Grand Total</b>				<b>3873</b>



**Objective #3** Increase awareness among **200 specialists** regarding the importance of correct positioning, prescription of personalized mobility equipment and delivery of equipment together with peer group independent living training for maximizing wheelchair user health and independence.

### Activities

3.1 Translate into Romanian and disseminate the USAID-ISPO-WHO Guidelines on the provision of Manual Wheelchairs in Less Resourced Settings.

3.2 Conference on appropriate wheelchair provision and independent living training for people with mobility disabilities in Romania.

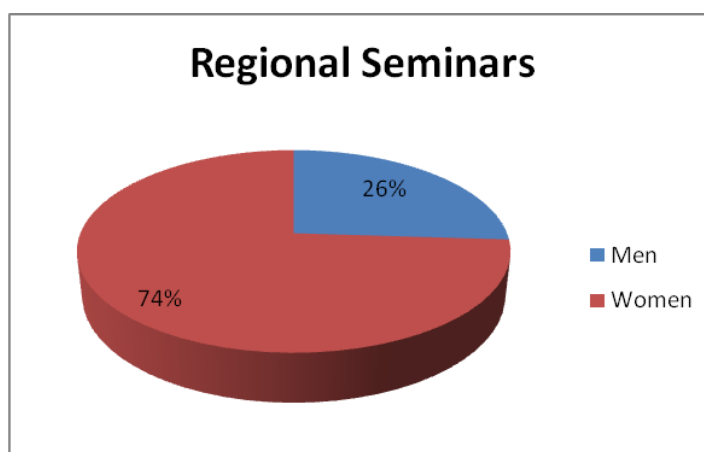
3.3 8 regional seminars to initiate consultation with people with disabilities in Romania, health care specialists, policy makers and producers of mobility equipments regarding the principles of appropriate wheelchair provision in Romania

### Result achieved

**225** Specialists informed about the importance of correct positioning, prescription of personalized mobility equipment and delivery of equipment together with peer group independent living training for maximizing wheelchair user health and independence

Main Outcomes	Targets	Results	Comments
3.1 WHO-ISPO-USAID Wheelchair Provision Guidelines translated in Romanian and disseminated to key institutions		Yes	accomplished
3.2 Participants attended the Conference on appropriate wheelchair provision and independent living training for people with mobility disabilities for launching the WHO-ISPO-USAID Wheelchair Provision Guidelines	80	100	accomplished
3.3 Participants attended 8 Regional seminars organized for disseminating appropriate wheelchair provision principles and WHO-ISPO-USAID Wheelchair Provision Guidelines	200	225	113% achieved

Regional Seminars		
Women	167	74 %
Men	58	26 %
Total	225	100 %



**Objective #4** Increase the professional quality of peer group independent living training services provided by MRF through service **quality certification**.

#### **Activities**

4.1 Quality certification for MRF's peer group independent living training services

4.2 Train 1 MRF employee in the field of quality assurance

4.3 Annual quality assurance visits to the regional offices

#### **Results achieved:**

- Quality certification obtained for independent living training services, according to SR EN ISO 9001:2008 standards. A Quality Management System developed and implemented in order to maintain and improve the quality of services provided to wheelchair users.
- Four MRF employees trained in the field of quality assurance
- 3 Quality assurance visits conducted to regional offices

#### **Conclusions:**

- MRF achieved all the objectives included in the initial project. During the first three years of implementation the results met the targets, or even exceeded the targets.
- Access of people with mobility disabilities to wheelchair user services improved significantly due to the network of regional teams created within the project. Services offered by the regional teams included: home visits or visits to rehabilitation centers or hospitals, assessments and prescriptions of appropriate mobility equipment, wheelchair adaptations, and PG independent living training.
- Peer group training seminars and active rehabilitation camps provided opportunities to wheelchair users to experience independent living in wheelchair accessible settings, thus making progress in regaining self-confidence and independence and facilitating their social reintegration.
- Active rehabilitation camps organized by the regional teams within the *Wheels of Change* project financed by USAID are among the very few opportunities available to wheelchair users for getting out of isolation and participating in social and recreational activities. Camps are especially appreciated for the wheelchair handling techniques that participants can learn and practice, specific medical information, and for the opportunities of sharing information and learning from the experience of wheelchair users who face similar problems. Beneficiaries' testimonies reveal that even more important is the impact on their morale: they make new friends, regain self-confidence and the hope that they can live an independent life and reintegrate in the society.
- Through information seminars for specialists, MRF initiated debates and raised awareness among specialists on the importance of personalized mobility equipment and the need for specialized wheelchair user services to be offered together with the equipment.
- The translation and dissemination of WHO-ISPO-USAID Wheelchair Provision Guidelines raised awareness on wheelchair provision principles among specialists, beneficiaries and public authorities.

## ***Wheels of Change Move On – towards appropriate wheelchair provision, sports and accessibility for mainstream participation of Romanians with disabilities***

April 1, 2012 - March 31, 2014

### **I. Objectives**

1. Involve wheelchair users in analytically examining and improving the impact of existing wheelchair services on the posture, health and social participation
2. Facilitate mainstreaming of the WHO Wheelchair Provision Guidelines and develop the accompanying training package into a certified wheelchair prescription course for Romanian professionals.
3. Mainstream wheelchair sports in Romania via ongoing local sports events
4. Create and award the trademark “Motivation for Accessibility” to stimulate wheelchair accessibility as the necessary condition for users participation in sports, recreation and culture

### **II. Main Activities and Results Achieved**

**Objective #1** Involve wheelchair users in analytically examining and improving the impact of existing wheelchair services on the posture, health and social participation

#### **Activities**

##### **A1. Comprehensive impact study of existing wheelchair services and improved product and service provision for 1,960 wheelchair users**

- 1.1 Sociological study of the impact of mobility products and services on the positioning, health and social participation of wheelchair users in Romania
- 1.2 Itinerant wheelchair user positioning, adaptations and health assessment caravans
- 1.3 Appropriate wheelchair provision for 1,960 Romanians with mobility disabilities, and ongoing wheelchair user support groups for 147 users

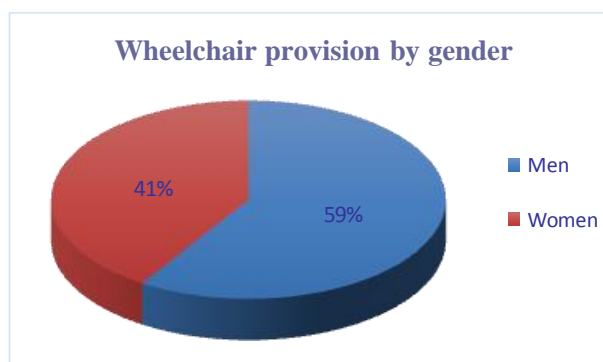
#### **Results achieved**

- ***Life in a Wheelchair: from Isolation to Participation*** - a comprehensive sociological study conducted on wheelchairs and wheelchair user services.
- Comprehensive health assessments conducted for **126** wheelchairs users; 6 itinerant wheelchair user positioning, adaptations and health assessment caravans organized (active rehabilitation camps).
- Appropriate wheelchairs provided to **3,202** people with mobility disabilities.
- **163** wheelchair users participated in group support activities

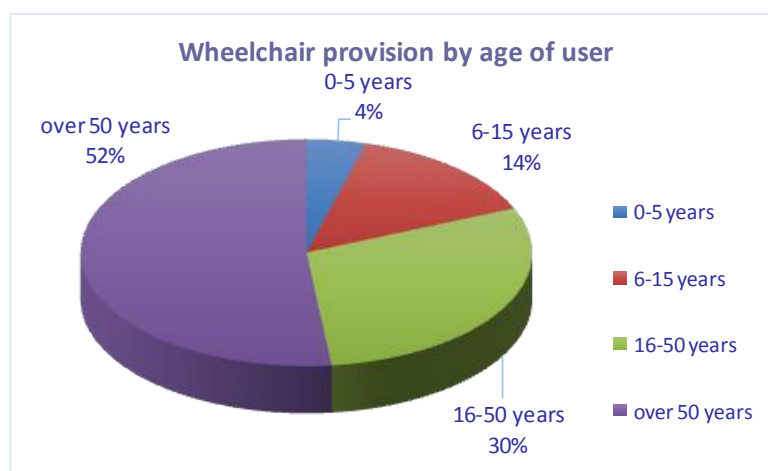
Main Outcomes	Targets	Results	Comments
1.1. Sociological study of the impact of wheelchairs and services on the positioning, health and social participation of wheelchair users in Romania conducted			
No. of questionnaires applied (face-to-face interviews)	620	1034	167%
No. of participants in focus groups (FG)	120	130	108%
No. of phone interviews conducted	100	100	100%
Total participants in FG, face-to-face and phone interviews	747	<b>1191</b>	159%
No. of focus groups conducted	12	12	100%
1.2 Itinerant wheelchair user positioning, adaptations and health assessment caravans (camps) organized			
No. of camps organized	6	6	100%
No. of health assessments conducted for WCUs	120	126	105%
1.3 <b>3202</b> appropriate wheelchair provided & 163 WCUs participated in group support activities			
No. of women who received appropriate wheelchairs	1282	1312	102%
No. of men who received appropriate wheelchairs	678	1890	279%
No. of wheelchair users who participated in support groups	147	163	111%

**3202 appropriate wheelchairs provided by the regional teams:**

Wheelchair provision by gender		
<b>Men</b>	1890	59%
<b>Women</b>	1312	41%
<b>Total</b>	<b>3202</b>	100%

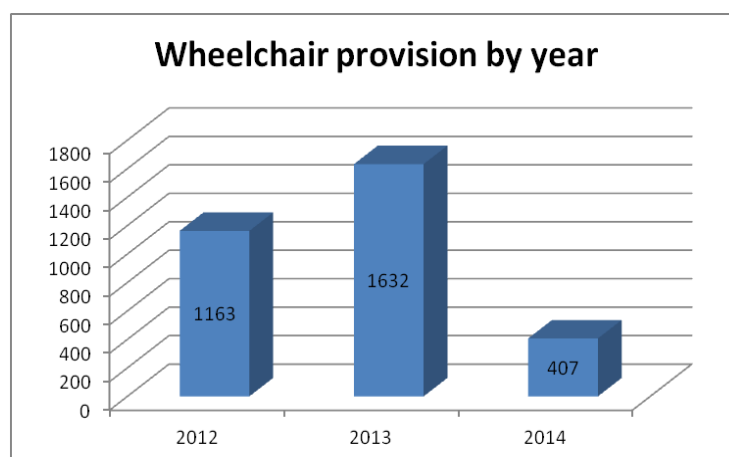


Wheelchair provision by age of user		
<b>0-5 years</b>	136	4%
<b>6-15 years</b>	460	14%
<b>16-50 years</b>	948	30%
<b>over 50 years</b>	1658	52%
<b>Total</b>	<b>3202</b>	100%





Wheelchair provision by year			
	2012	2013	2014
<b>Quarter 1</b>		320	407
<b>Quarter 2</b>	452	329	
<b>Quarter 3</b>	375	474	
<b>Quarter 4</b>	336	509	
<b>Total</b>	1163	1632	407
<b>Grand Total</b>			3202



**Objective #2** Facilitate mainstreaming of the WHO Wheelchair Provision Guidelines and develop the accompanying training package into a certified wheelchair prescription course for Romanian professionals.

### Activities

#### **A2. Training and certification on *appropriate* wheelchair provision for 300 PT/OT professionals**

2.1 WHO Wheelchair Guidelines training seminars for 300 students, professors and specialists

2.2 Wheelchair assessment, prescription and adaptation practice for 105 students, professors and specialists

2.3 Presentation of the Wheelchair Guidelines and appropriate wheelchair provision principles at the Annual Congress of Physiotherapists in Romania and similar events

2.4 Develop and certify a training course for PT/OT practitioners on appropriate wheelchair provision based on the WHO Wheelchair Guidelines and WSTP

2.5 Certified training conducted for 30 practitioners on appropriate wheelchair assessment, prescription, provision and adaptation as per the WHO Wheelchair Guidelines and WSTP

### Results achieved

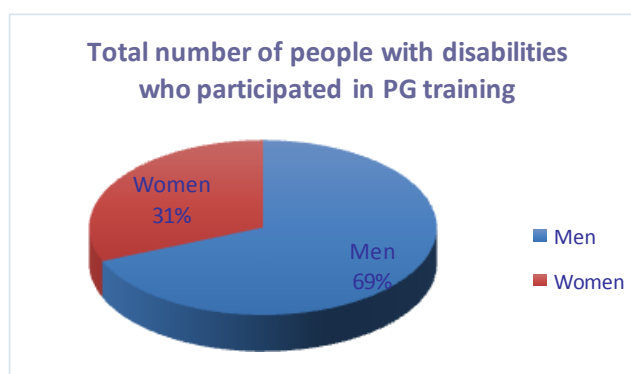
- **13 training seminars** organized for **440** students, professors and specialists for disseminating WHO Wheelchair Provision Guidelines
- **22** PGT practice seminars organized
- WHO Wheelchair Provision Guidelines presented at the Annual Congress of Physiotherapy and four other relevant events
- **Training course** on wheelchair assessment, prescription provision and adaptation - Basic and Intermediate Modules - **certified** by NAQ
- **31** professionals trained on wheelchair assessment, prescription provision and adaptation according to certified courses based on WHO WSTP; three Basic Module courses and one Intermediate Module course organized

Main Outcomes	Targets	Results	Comments
2.1 13 Training seminars for students, professors and specialists on WHO-ISPO-USAID Wheelchair Provision Guidelines conducted	300	440	147%
2.2 22 Wheelchair prescription, positioning and adaptations practice sessions conducted for students, professors and specialists at seminars and camps attended by wheelchair users	105	209	199%
2.3 WHO Wheelchair Guidelines and appropriate wheelchair provision principles presented at the Annual Congress of Physiotherapists in Romania and 4 other similar events	5	5	100
	100	114	114%
2.4 Training course on appropriate wheelchair provision based on the WHO Wheelchair Guidelines and WSTP developed and certified	WSTP training courses certified	WSTP training courses certified	
2.5 31 Professionals trained on appropriate wheelchair provision as per the certified training based on WHO Wheelchair Guidelines and WSTP Basic and Intermediate Modules	30	31	103%

Total number of professionals trained		
Men	259	37%
Women	442	63%
Total	701	100%



Total number of people with disabilities who participated in PG training		
Men	224	69%
Women	102	31%
Total	326	100%



### **Objective #3** Mainstream wheelchair sports in Romania via ongoing local sports events

#### **Activities**

#### **A3. Ongoing wheelchair sports trainings and events for 350 wheelchair users and 140 sports instructors and referees**

A3.1 Annual wheelchair sports training for 15 instructors and referees

A3.2 Ongoing local sports trainings for 60 wheelchair users

A3.3 Local wheelchair sports demonstrations in public spaces for 350 wheelchair users, 140 sports instructors and the general public

A3.4 Annual wheelchair sports event for wheelchair users throughout the country

#### **Results achieved**

- 47 instructors and referees trained on wheelchair sports
- Local sports trainings organized via 5 regional teams, attended by 62 wheelchair users
- 90 Local wheelchair sports demonstrations organized in public spaces, 366 wheelchair users, 159 sports instructors and general public attended
- Annual wheelchair sports event organized for 62 wheelchair users throughout the country

<b>Main Outcomes</b>		<b>Targets</b>	<b>Results</b>	<b>Comments</b>
3.1 47 instructors and referees trained in wheelchair sports		15	47	313%
3.2 Local sports trainings for wheelchair users organized via five regional teams	no. of WCUs	60	66	110%
3.3 90 Local wheelchair sports demonstrations organized in public spaces for 366 wheelchair users and 159 sports instructors	no. of WCUs	350	366	105%
	no. of sports instructors	140	159	114%
	no. of sports demonstrations	70	90	129%
3.4 Annual wheelchair sports event organized for 62 wheelchair users throughout the country		60	62	103%

**Objective #4** Create and award the “Motivation for Accessibility” Mark to stimulate wheelchair accessibility as the necessary condition for wheelchair users’ participation in sports, recreation and culture

#### **Activities**

#### **A4. Wheelchair accessibility services and trademark “Motivation for Accessibility” for 2,140 wheelchair users and 963 sports, leisure and culture facilities**

A4.1 Develop and formalize wheelchair accessibility assessment procedures

A4.2 Create and register the trademark “Motivation for Accessibility” at the State Office for Inventions and Trademarks (OSIM)

A4.3 Develop the capacity of 5 regional MRF teams in wheelchair accessibility services

A4.4 Wheelchair accessibility assessments and recommendations to 2,140 wheelchair users and 963 sports, recreation and cultural spaces in Romania via de new trademark

A4.5 Create the first electronic map of wheelchair accessible locations in Romania

## Results achieved

- Wheelchair accessibility assessment procedures developed and formalized
- “Motivation for Accessibility” Trademark created and registered at the State Office for Inventions and Trademarks (OSIM)
- 10 MRF regional teams trained in wheelchair accessibility services
- Wheelchair accessibility assessments conducted for 2,175 wheelchair users’ homes and 1,281 buildings in tourism, sports, recreational and other areas of public interest
- Accessibility Map created

Main Outcomes	Targets	Results	Comments
4.1 Accessibility assessment procedures and tools developed	accessibility assessment procedures developed	accessibility assessment procedures developed	
4.2 “Motivation for Accessibility” trademark created and registered at the State Office for Inventions and Trademarks (OSIM)	accessibility mark created and registered at OSIM	accessibility mark created and registered at OSIM	
4.3 MRF regional teams trained in wheelchair accessibility services	5 MRF teams trained	10 MRF teams trained	
4.4 2,175 wheelchair accessibility assessments of wheelchair users’ homes and 1,281 assessments of public interest buildings conducted	2140	2175	102%
	963	1281	133%
4.5 Accessibility Map created	Accessibility Map created	Accessibility Map created	

## Conclusions:

- MRF achieved all the objectives of the *Wheels of Change Move On* project
- The extension carried forward the impact of the initial project by expanding the range of services that enabled wheelchair users’ social participation, thus reducing the number of wheelchair users immobilized at home and unable to participate in sports, leisure and culture
- Service diversification that included group support, wheelchair sports and accessibility assessments brought the regional teams closer to our beneficiaries and increased the impact of MRF services
- After participating in the counseling sessions most participants have a more positive attitude and increased self-esteem, they changed the way they interact with family members and significantly improved their communication skills. One of the most rewarding examples was a beneficiary who got out from home for the first time after seven years since the accident as a result of the counseling activity.
- MRF conducted the first Sociological research on the impact of wheelchair and wheelchair user services as perceived by Romanian wheelchair users. The findings confirm the value of Motivation’s activities dedicated to wheelchair provision and independent living skills training. The gathered information shows that those respondents who received independent living training are more involved in social life.

- MRF developed the first **certified professional training program** on wheelchair assessment, prescription, provision and adaptation based on the WHO WSTP, thus creating for the first time professional training opportunities in wheelchair provision.
- The Accessibility Map together with the Accessibility Mark created through the project are useful tools for promoting good practices in building accessibility and for advocating for an improved accessibility to wheelchair users.

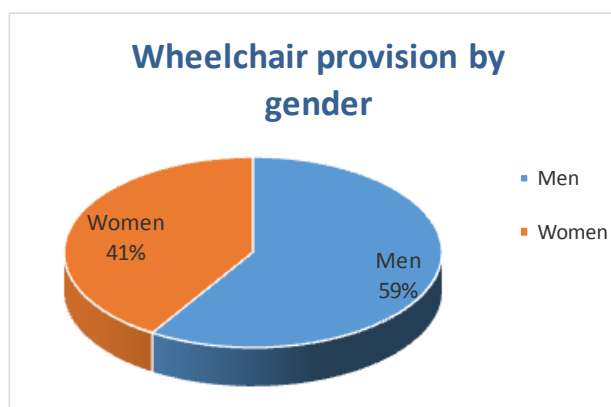
### Cumulative Results of Wheels of Change and Wheels of Change Move On projects

April 1, 2009 - March 31, 2014

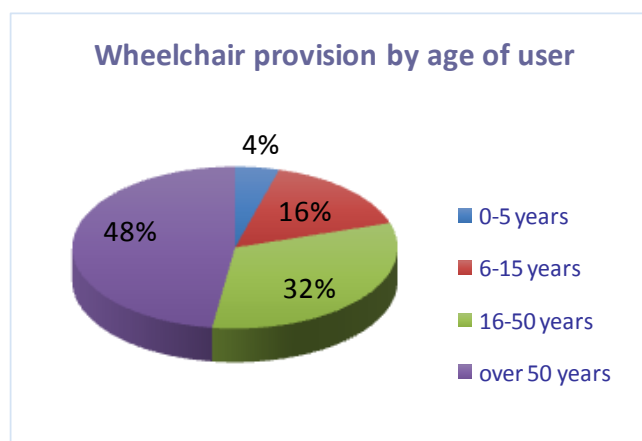
Appropriate wheelchair provision and independent living training were the main activities implemented by MRF regional teams throughout the project. Also, MRF activities focused on raising awareness on the principles of appropriate wheelchair provision by disseminating WHO Guidelines on Manual Wheelchair Provision among students, professors and specialists. Tables below present the cumulative results of these activities after five years of project implementation.

Main Outcomes	Targets	Results	Comments
Appropriate wheelchairs prescribed and provided to beneficiaries	4,960	7,075	143% achieved

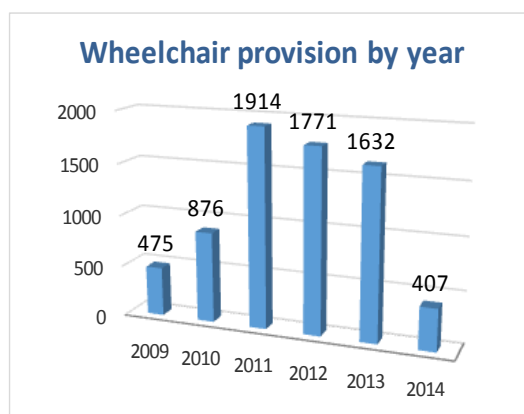
Wheelchair provision by gender		
Men	4169	59%
Women	2906	41%
<b>Total</b>	<b>7075</b>	<b>100%</b>



Wheelchair provision by age of user		
0-5 years	310	4%
6-15 years	1111	16%
16-50 years	2276	32%
over 50 years	3378	48%
<b>Total</b>	<b>7075</b>	<b>100%</b>



Wheelchair provision by year						
	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Quarter 1		194	493	608	320	407
Quarter 2	74	232	406	452	329	
Quarter 3	275	233	455	375	474	
Quarter 4	126	217	560	336	509	
<b>Total</b>	<b>475</b>	<b>876</b>	<b>1914</b>	<b>1771</b>	<b>1632</b>	<b>407</b>
<b>Grand Total</b>						<b>7075</b>



Seminars for specialists		
<b>Men</b>	344	32%
<b>Women</b>	742	68%
<b>Total</b>	1086	100%



Main Outcomes	Targets	Results	Comments
People with disabilities attended independent living training programs: 109 PG independent living seminars and 66 two-week independent living training programs organized	1668	1755	105%
One-week active rehabilitation camps for children and adults with mobility disabilities	300	309	103%
25 camps organized: 5 camps for children and 20 camps for adults			
Specialists and students attended 35 information and awareness seminars	500	825	165%

### **c. Follow up and sustainability of program**

The entire network of 11 regional teams has continued to provide wheelchairs and wheelchair services after the completion of the project. Moreover, MRF recently expanded its regional outreach by creating three new teams in Cluj, Mures and Satu-Mare, thus reaching to a total number of 14 regional teams. After the completion of the initial *Wheels of Change* project, five regional teams received funding from USAID through the *Wheels of Change Move On* project, while the other six teams were sustained by MRF from its own resources generated through fund-raising from private donors or its income generating unit (Motivation LLC). MRF will continue to receive and then provide wheelchair donations from private donors such as The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (LDS) and will also attract contributions from the national Government for subsidized wheelchairs through the NHIA accreditation system, in order to ensure funding for the necessary mobility equipment to wheelchair users who cannot afford to buy a wheelchair or to cover the entire cost of a more efficient equipment.

Through the *Wheels of Change Move On – follow up* grant recently approved by USAID/World Learning, MRF will be able to continue and develop some of the activities implemented by the five regional teams within the *Wheels of Change* and *Wheels of Change Move On* projects, including independent living training programs that will continue through seminars and active rehabilitation camps, group support activities, wheelchair sport, and accessibility assessments of public interest buildings to be further included in the Accessibility Map.

The Research Study on wheelchairs and wheelchair user services conducted within the project will be further disseminated among key stakeholders and specialists within a National Conference to be organized within the *Wheels of Change Move On – follow up* grant, as well. The Study will raise awareness on the need to develop specific wheelchair user services, including training for an independent life in order to encourage and stimulate social integration of people with mobility disabilities.

The Wheelchair User hotline created by MRF within the initial *Wheels of Change* project will continue to provide information to wheelchair users on how to obtain an appropriate wheelchair, being further funded out of the MRF own resources. Although initially the hotline was considered not very successful due to the reduced number of wheelchair users that called this service, in time it became a useful tool serving multiple purposes: information source for wheelchair users on wheelchairs and wheelchair user services, referral point for regional services and a way of testing client satisfaction and improving wheelchair services as wheelchair users could easily address their eventual complaints to an upper level.

MRF will continue to organize certified training on WHO WSTP Basic and Intermediate modules for professionals within another USAID grant called *ACCESS - Accelerating Core Competencies for Effective Wheelchair Service and Support*, financed through World Vision. With World Vision support, MRF will also increase its advocacy efforts for improving the wheelchair provision system in Romania by including the principles of appropriate wheelchair provision as stated in the WHO Guidelines on Manual Wheelchair Provision in less resourced settings and the accompanying WSTP. Within the *Access* project, MRF will also review its own wheelchair provision procedures and will do the necessary adjustments in order to better comply with the recommendations of the WHO Guidelines and accompanying training package (WSTP). The WHO Guidelines on wheelchair provision translated into Romanian by MRF will be further promoted and disseminated among key stakeholders and

professionals at local, regional and national level and will be used as an advocacy tool for influencing policy change in wheelchair provision.

#### d. Summary of indicators

Wheels of Change				
Activity	Indicator	Target	Achieved	% Achieved
<b>1.Create a network of regional teams to provide specialized wheelchair user support services</b>	1.1 Regional teams created and trained	7	11	157%
	1.2 Regional operational offices created	7	11	157%
	1.3 Wheelchair User's hotline set up		Yes	achieved
	1.4 Consistent regional network working procedures created		Yes	achieved
	1.5 Annual evaluation and planning seminars organized	3	3	100%
<b>2. Provide appropriate mobility equipment and independent living peer group training</b>	2.1 Wheelchair assessments conducted	3,000	4,727	158%
	2.2 Appropriate wheelchairs provided	3,000	3,873	129%
	2.3 No. of people with disabilities who attended independent living training programs	1,500	1,555	104%
	2.4 No. of WCUs who participated in camps	180	184	102%
	No. of camps organized		19	
	2.5 No. of specialists who attended local information seminars	200	385	193%
	No. of local information seminars organized		22	
<b>3.Increase awareness among specialists regarding the principles of appropriate wheelchair provision</b>	3.1 WHO Wheelchair Provision Guidelines translated in Romanian		Yes	achieved
	3.2 No. of participants who attended the Conference for launching the WHO Guidelines	80	100	125%
	3.3 No. of participants who attended Regional seminars	200	225	113%
<b>4.Quality certification for MRF PGT services</b>	4.1 Quality certification for PGT services		Yes	achieved
	4.2 No. of employees trained in the field of quality assurance	1	4	400%
	4.3 Annual quality assurance visits to the regional offices	3	3	100%



### Wheels of Change Move On

Activity	Indicator	Target	Achieved	% Achieved
<b>Improved wheelchair user services</b>	Total no. of WCUs with improved access to WCU services, sports opportunities and accessibility solutions, out of which:	<b>2140</b>	<b>3401</b>	159%
	Men	<b>740</b>	<b>1998</b>	270%
	Women	<b>1400</b>	<b>1403</b>	100%
<b>1.1 Research Study on wheelchairs and wheelchair services</b>	No. of questionnaires applied	620	<b>1034</b>	167%
	No. of participants in focus groups (FG)	120	<b>130</b>	108%
	No. of phone interviews conducted	100	<b>100</b>	100%
	<b>Total participants in FG, face-to-face and phone interviews</b>	<b>747</b>	<b>1191</b>	159%
	<b>% of total WCUs who participated in the Research Study</b>	<b>34.91%</b>		<b>35%</b>
	No. of Focus Groups	<b>12</b>	<b>12</b>	100%
<b>1.2 Itinerant health assessment caravans (camps)</b>	No. of camps	<b>6</b>	<b>6</b>	100%
	No. WCUs who received health assessments	<b>120</b>	<b>126</b>	105%
<b>1.3 Appropriate wheelchair provision</b>	Wheelchairs provided, out of which:	<b>1960</b>	<b>3202</b>	163%
	Men who received wheelchairs	678	1890	279%
	Women who received wheelchairs	1282	1312	102%
<b>1.3 Group support</b>	No. of participants in group support	<b>147</b>	<b>163</b>	111%
<b>2. Training for specialists</b>	Total no. of professionals trained, out of which:	<b>300</b>	<b>701</b>	234%
	No. of men trained	<b>65</b>	<b>259</b>	398%
	No. of women trained	<b>235</b>	<b>442</b>	188%

Activity	Indicator	Target	Achieved	% Achieved
<b>2.1 Training for specialists on WHO Guidelines on wheelchair provision</b>	No. of information seminars conducted in universities	13	13	100%
	No. of participants in seminars in universities, out of which:	300	440	147%
	No. of men who participated in seminars	65	182	280%
	No. of women who participated in seminars	235	258	110%
<b>2.2 PGT Practice sessions for students and specialists</b>	No. of PG practice seminars for specialists	21	22	105%
	No. of specialists who participated in practice sessions	105	209	199%
<b>2.3 WHO Guidelines presented in Physiotherapy Congress and other Conferences</b>	No. of events where WHO Guidelines was presented	5	5	100%
	No. of participants	100	114	114%
<b>2.4 Development and certification of training courses on WHO WSTP</b>	No. of courses who got certified	two certified modules	two certified modules	achieved
<b>2.5 Conduct certified courses</b>	No. of specialists trained in WHO WSTP certified courses	30	31	103%
<b>Wheelchair Sport</b>				
<b>3.1 Training for coaches and referees</b>	No. of coaches and referees trained, out of which:	15	47	313%
	No. of coaches trained	10	19	190%
	No. of referees trained	5	12	240%
<b>3.2 Wheelchair Sport Training</b>	No. of WCUs who participated in sport training	60	66	110%

Activity	Indicator	Target	Achieved	% Achieved
<b>3.3. Wheelchar sport demonstrations</b>	No. of Wheelchair sport demonstrations	<b>72</b>	<b>90</b>	125%
	No. of WCUs who participated in sport demonstrations	<b>350</b>	366	105%
	No. of coaches and referees who participated in sport demonstrations, out of which:	<b>140</b>	<b>159</b>	114%
	No. of men	<b>60</b>	111	185%
	No. of women	<b>80</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>60%</b>
<b>3.4. Annual wheelchair sport event</b>	No. of wheelchair athletes who participated	<b>60</b>	<b>62</b>	103%
<b>4.1 Develop accessibility assessment procedures</b>	Accessibility assessment procedures developed		Yes	achieved
<b>4.2 Accessibility Mark created and registered at OSIM</b>	Accessibility Mark created and registered		Yes	achieved
<b>4.3 Train regional teams in accessibility services</b>	No. of teams trained in accessibility services	5	10	200%
<b>4.4 Accessibility assessments</b>	No. of WCUs homes assessed regarding accessibility	<b>2140</b>	<b>2175</b>	102%
	No. of public interest buildings assessed regarding accessibility	<b>963</b>	<b>1275</b>	132%
<b>4.5 Create Accessibility Map</b>	Accessibility Map created		Yes	achieved

## V. Problems Encountered and Solutions

The lack of building accessibility and adapted transportation was a major constraint faced by Motivation during project implementation as it affected wheelchair users' participation in project activities and identification of appropriate venues for conducting training programs or events involving wheelchair users. Wheelchair sport events, camps and training seminars for wheelchair users were particularly affected, as wheelchair user accessible facilities are very scarce and the number of accessible hotel rooms is reduced. To the extent possible, MRF used its own camp location for organizing such events, but this was suitable only for beneficiaries from the North East region and surrounding areas, while for the other regions, due to the big distances MRF tried to identify other locations closer to wheelchair users' homes.

While financial constraints are often mentioned as an obstacle in making a building accessible, even for moderately accessible locations where full accessibility seems much easier to be achieved, we faced an unexpected resistance to change. In some cases only minor changes are needed, such as a folding bar for toilet, or a handrail on both sides of the ramp, but still we face the lack of interest in making those changes, as the prevalent type of thinking

is "we invested once, it worked so far, so it will continue to work the same in the future". Educating people and changing mentalities about the need and advantages of having accessible buildings for every member of the community proved to be quite challenging.

An unforeseen challenge faced by regional teams was the difficulty in convincing wheelchair users to participate in seminars or camps. Lack of accessible transportation is one of the reasons why people refuse to participate in such events. Many of MRF beneficiaries are people living in rural or remote areas and it is difficult to ensure transportation from their homes to the seminar or camp location. In Romania public transportation is in most cases not accessible to wheelchair users. In order to ensure the transportation of the participants, we used MRF cars whenever possible. Recruiting participants for camps and seminars was also a challenge because many beneficiaries are initially reluctant to leave their homes, especially when they are invited to participate in seminars or camps without being accompanied by a family member. Many wheelchair users live in isolation and are not used to having a specific daily program. Our peer trainers, wheelchair users themselves played a key role in overcoming beneficiaries' reluctance and motivating them to become socially active.

The lack of access to affordable wheelchair accessible transportation is often mentioned as a major barrier against participation in sports or group activities as well. Ensuring transportation from home to the sports location was a difficult task, as MRF transportation capacity is limited, local public transportation is generally not accessible and very few beneficiaries have their own vehicles. In order to solve this problem, to the extent possible, our teams tried to group beneficiaries who have a vehicle with the ones who do not have access to transportation so they could come together to project activities.

Identification of wheelchair users willing to engage in regular sports activities proved to be a challenge for all regional teams. Although MRF has a large database of wheelchair users, only a few of them have the physical capacity or a good health condition for practicing a sport on a regular basis. Another unexpected barrier was the weather condition, as Romania faced extremely high temperatures during summers which also discouraged sport practicing. Absences from the sports training have also been a challenge. They occurred either due to unexpected health problems or due to the attitude of the beneficiaries who lived in isolation at home and were not used to participate in a regular, scheduled program. Another constraint we can mention is that active wheelchair users who are most suitable for sports activities usually have jobs and family responsibilities and they have little spare time to allocate for these activities. The sports training schedule often overlaps with their job schedule. Reduced interest in practicing sports is a cultural issue, too, as in Romania, the general population is also not very interested in practicing regular sports activities and unlike in other countries, even the education system does not encourage very much sports activities.

Attracting women towards practicing wheelchair sport proved also to be a very challenging task, as women are even less interested in these activities than men. Since women seemed more willing to participate in wheelchair archery than in basketball, MRF tried to develop this sport in more regions in order to encourage women wheelchair users to become more independent and socially active. Attracting women coaches and referees in wheelchair sport activities was particularly problematic, especially due to the reduced number of women

professionals in sports in general. The only target that MRF did not meet within the project was the number of women coaches and referees who participated in wheelchair sport demonstrations, as only 48 women participated in these events compared to a target of 80 women. However, the overall target of sports instructors and referees participating in public wheelchair sport demonstrations was exceeded as more men were involved in these activities than initially planned (111 men compared to an initial target of 60).

Wheelchair users were initially reluctant to enroll in counseling activities as well, due to the misconception that psychological counseling is only for people with mental health problems. However, after participating in the first counseling sessions their attitude changes dramatically and in the end, their only recommendation for improvement was to organize more such events in the future, as in most cases overcoming from trauma and emotional problems usually require long-time support.

A major barrier for many of our beneficiaries, especially the ones in rural areas is the limited access to specialized medical services. People with mobility disabilities have to travel long distances in order to get a medical recommendation for a wheelchair and many of them cannot afford to travel as the public transportation is not accessible and prices for the private transportation are prohibitive. We tried to solve some of these problems through wheelchair donations. However, the number of donated wheelchairs is limited and they are not appropriate to all beneficiaries.

Another unforeseen challenge we faced was the lack of leadership on the governmental side regarding public policies for people with disabilities. The National Agency for People with Handicap was restructured and became a Department within the Ministry of Labor and Social Security. The Directors of the Department changed quite often and it was very difficult to establish a relationship and initiate a dialogue for a policy change. Also, there have been discussions within the government about the change of the role of the Ministry of Health and of its relationship with the National Health Insurance House. Due to these changes, it was quite difficult to identify an appropriate counterpart at the decision-making level to initiate a dialogue about the need of developing a coherent policy regarding wheelchair and wheelchair user services provision. MRF will continue to disseminate the Guidelines on Wheelchair Provision among central and local authorities, professionals and key stakeholders in order to raise awareness on the principles of the appropriate wheelchair provision. Eventually, this bottom-up approach will create a favorable environment for influencing policy change at all levels.

The development of the Occupational Standard (OS) for the occupation of '*Technician for wheelchair assessment, prescription, provision and adaptation*' was one of the most difficult activities. A lot of back and forth adjustments of the OS were necessary in order to comply with the structure, the very specific language, and very strict format required by the occupational standard methodology. The numerous revisions required additional time resources that could not be anticipated at the beginning of the process. Another difficulty was the limited expertise in this area and the lack of models, as most of the existing occupational standards were drafted based on the previous methodology which was no longer valid. The development of the OS was a requirement for the course certification process.

Conducting a certified training course proved also to be a real challenge due to the cumbersome methodology and bureaucracy required by the Romanian legislation. The same documentation package is required for one-week specialization courses or for much longer vocational courses and this is a very time-consuming process for an organization like Motivation which is not primarily a training provider. After completing the first certified course we put together a checklist with the necessary steps and the required documentation and procedures in order to ensure compliance with the methodology for the future courses. Due to the experience gained at the first course, the organization and logistics went much smoother for the following courses.

On the staffing side, identification of appropriate peer group trainers proved to be very challenging as many wheelchair users are not willing to be involved in full time activities and also because of the reduced number of active and motivated wheelchair users able and willing to become peer trainers. A major barrier to the employment of wheelchair users is also the lack of accessible transportation for wheelchair users to travel from home to work and back. In order to address this issue, MRF organized a driving school activity that helped members of the regional teams with mobility disabilities obtain driving licenses, thus achieving maximum mobility to enable them to carry out their role in the region.

Another challenge in staff recruiting for the regional teams was the lack of professionals specialized in wheelchair provision. In order to address these issues, MRF trained regional staff on appropriate wheelchair provision and peer group independent living training. Also, MRF involved volunteer Peer Group trainers in project activities whenever needed and provided on-site coaching and support to the regional teams.

Another major constraint faced by the regional teams was staff fluctuation, especially among physical therapists. As physical therapy is a liberal profession, many young physical therapists left the country for better paid jobs in Western Europe. Another cause of staff fluctuation were maternity leaves, as Romanian legislation provides up to two years paid leave for caring for children. MRF tried to reduce the negative impact of these staff fluctuations by providing the necessary training to the new team members. Based on the specific needs of each team, additional support was provided, especially to the teams with new members. Additional time and resources were invested in training new staff in order to become acquainted with the project activities and all required working and financial procedures. MRF also used volunteers as temporary solutions, especially during peer group training seminars or camps.

The coordination of eleven regional teams and the communication within the network proved to be very challenging as well. Remote coordination required more efforts and it was time-consuming, as communication with the regional teams was mainly done through e-mail and Internet. Due to the technical limitations, the interaction with the teams was mainly one-to-one, or in small groups as larger group discussions were frequently interrupted. Sometimes efficiency and group cohesion suffered because of these limitations. Face-to-face meetings organized twice a year were very useful for creating a team-work spirit and for improving the relationships among colleagues. MRF developed a comprehensive coordination and communication plan in order to avoid overlaps and gaps and ensure an efficient flow of

information both within the network of regional teams and within the project management team as well.

## VI. Financial Position

Total Budget (USAID funded portion) for both *Wheels of Change* and the *Wheels of Change Move On* extension was **\$2,153,000**.

The table below presents Budgeted Expenses compared to the actual cumulative USAID funded project expenditures (by major categories).

Budget Categories	Budgeted Expenses	Actual Expenditures
Personnel	\$926,118	\$934,403
Fringe benefits	\$191,318	\$193,244
Consultants	\$97,100	\$95,720
Travel & Transportation	\$89,282	\$95,313
Equipment	\$123,514	\$122,327
Other Direct Costs	\$391,265	\$382,010
Program Activities	\$334,403	\$329,932
<b>Totals</b>	<b>\$2,153,000</b>	<b>\$2,152,949</b>

The amount (in USD) of interest earned during project implementation years.

- 2009: \$42
- 2010: \$34
- 2011: \$54
- 2012: \$96
- 2013: \$95

## VII. Documentation of Shared Learning

Although a formal evaluation of the USAID-funded *Wheels of Change* project was not conducted, the comprehensive Research Study on the impact of wheelchairs and wheelchair user services conducted by MRF within the project provided a wealth of information about the usefulness and the impact of MRF activities. As a first study of its kind conducted in Romania and probably in the entire East European region, the report could offer valuable information on the factors that influence social participation of persons with mobility disabilities, as perceived by wheelchair users themselves.

The research span from January 2012 to February 2014 and **it took a close look at the impact of mobility equipment and services, as perceived and expressed by the wheelchair users.** The target group included 1,191 wheelchair users or persons who need a wheelchair, whose opinions and perceptions were recorded through 1,034 questionnaires (face to face meetings), 100 phone interviews and 12 focus groups (with 130 persons in the same category, some of them having answered the questionnaire, too). The respondents are current or future beneficiaries of Motivation's services, and this renders the findings of the research not entirely relevant for the general population of wheelchair users in Romania.

Most of the respondents appreciated positively the services provided by Motivation Romania. In this regard, they noted:

- the efforts made to provide good quality wheelchairs for a cost that can be covered by the state subsidy;
- the fact that Motivation Romania is among the few providers of information and counseling services on wheelchair use and independent living for wheelchair users (even while in hospital);
- the involvement of wheelchair users in the provision of these services;
- home visits in the case of wheelchair users who cannot leave their homes;
- socializing and wheelchair sports;

All of the above activities were carried out by MRF within the *Wheels of change* project. For more details, an English language Overview of the report is attached as Annex 2.

A scientific paper regarding the results of the Comprehensive health assessments conducted by MRF during active rehabilitation camps organized within the *Wheels of Change Move On* project was presented at the 3rd International Congress on Physical Education, Sport and Kinetotherapy (ICPESK 2013) hosted by the National University of Physical Education and Sports (UNEFIS) in Bucharest. MRF introduced a unique assessment and intervention tool consisting of comprehensive health assessments to analyze and assess wheelchair impact on positioning, nutrition and general health, in the context where no such services or studies were available in Romania (a copy of this Study is attached as Annex 4)

Health assessments were conducted by a multidisciplinary team including an orthopedist, a rehabilitation doctor, a nutritionist and a physical therapist. Specialists used specific screening forms specially created for this purpose. Each wheelchair user filled in a questionnaire with items related to their nutrition and general lifestyle. The screening process included various weight and height measurements and BMI was determined. Based on the results of the screening process, each wheelchair user received a personalized diet, basic information on nutrition and hydration and they were instructed how to have a healthy lifestyle. Another screening section included: associated pathology, physical exercise routines, heart rates (HR) and blood pressure (BP), muscular tonus evaluation, osteoporosis test, or strength test using the palm dynamometer. After the second screening process, each participant received recommendations and was trained on how to improve his or her physical condition. 126 wheelchair users received health assessments.

The meeting with Motivation Romania changed the lives of a great number of people with mobility disabilities, according to their own declarations. For some of them, meeting the Motivation Romania teams had been a decisive moment, as they were exposed to **a model of social integration** that they did not believe was accessible to them. A testimony of one of wheelchair users is relevant: ‘Motivation managed to get us out of our homes (I had not been out of the house for years) and to integrate us!’

### **VIII. Recommendations to World Learning for improvements of the grant management process**

MRF has no recommendations to make.